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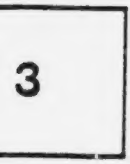

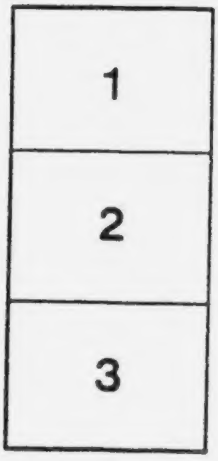

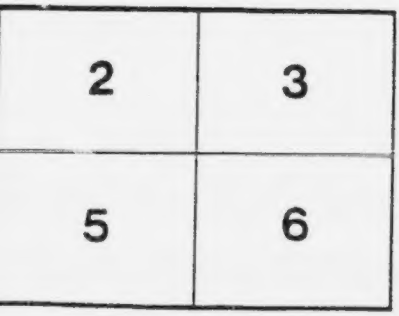

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BASIS OF PUBLICATION

This series of Papers is issued under the auspices of a Committee drawn from various Christian bodies and political parties and is based on the following convictions :

1. That Great Britain was in August morally bound to declare war and is no less bound to carry the war to a decisive issue ;
2. That the war is none the less an outcome and a revelation of the un-Christian principles which have dominated the life of Western Christendom and of which both the Church and the nations have need to repent ;
3. That followers of Christ, as members of the Church, are linked to one another in a fellowship which transcends all divisions of nationality or race ;
4. That the Christian duties of love and forgiveness are as binding in time of war as in time of peace ;
5. That Christians are bound to recognize the insufficiency of mere compulsion for overcoming evil and to place supreme reliance upon spiritual forces and in particular upon the power and method of the Cross ;
6. That only in proportion as Christian principles dictate the terms of settlement will a real and lasting peace be secured ;
7. That it is the duty of the Church to make an altogether new effort to realize and apply to all the relations of life its own positive ideal of brotherhood and fellowship ;
8. That with God all things are possible.

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THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO WAR

How can we do away with war, and yet retain the good effects of war upon the race? That is the question which is suggesting itself to an increasing number of minds to-day. It might perhaps have been expected that, in full view of the horrors now being enacted in Flanders and Poland, men would have become willing to declare that any kind of life would be better than war. But nothing of the sort is happening. The common judgement declares that many things might be worse than war. Not only might treachery and dishonour be worse than war, but 'mere' peace might be worse. Probably states of peace have often been morally worse than the present state of the world. A society engrossed in a sordid scramble for gold, and suffering the enervation that comes with luxury, is immeasurably lower than a society in arms; and because a perception of this is becoming common the cause of peace does not greatly prosper. The ideals of the pacifist do not stir the heart, and even while English homes are one after another plunged in the sorrow of bereavement the conviction that the soldier's calling is a high one grows among us. It would be hard indeed to prove that the people of Great Britain are less military in spirit than they were a year ago, in spite of all the horrors which war has wrought.

The fact is that war beyond all question achieves two good results, one for the individual, and one for the nation, and it seems to many that these good things might be lost in peace. It is therefore an essential preliminary to any hopeful work for peace to recognize honestly the moral value that there is in war.

Let us consider the case of the individual first. It is being proved to-day that military training often develops qualities of manhood which had remained dormant during

peace. Lads who, six months ago, had pasty faces, shifty eyes, and a shambling gait, now walk into our midst for their days of leave transformed—clear-eyed, clear-skinned, morally and physically braced. John has an altogether new value in the eyes of Mary, not only because he is healthier and therefore handsomer, nor only because being in uniform he is better dressed than ever before, but because he really is more of a man, and therefore likely to be more of a support and a defence as a husband. Men who seemed to care for nothing are showing that they can care even to the point of sacrifice for honour, and liberty, and the great thing called ' decency '.

And these results have been achieved just because our new soldiers have found in life a cause so big that for the sake of it they are able to forget self, and are willing to accept discipline. They have put themselves in bonds, and learnt a new freedom. They have surrendered their self-centred life and found instead a larger one. Beyond question they have touched a higher plane of being.

And yet the effect thus produced is not merely the result of discipline or of self-forgetfulness. It is partly due to the fact that the business these men are engaged in is either already dangerous to life or is going to be so. The tedium of life in a training camp would be beyond all endurance were it not for the chance of something greater beyond it, and that something greater is just the excitement of battle. There is a certain thrill in living dangerously, in taking daily deadly risks, in walking with one's life in one's hands ; and those who have experienced that thrill bear the marks of it ever afterwards.

For a certain percentage of men life is never so worth living as when at any moment it may be lost, and all the safe paths have a tameness about them which earns them a measure of contempt. War may have horrors untold in it, but it has thrills in it just because of the horrors. It may be dreadful beyond words. It may even drive some men insane. But just because it involves such strains it is the making of other men. Most of it is reported to be a very prosaic and even a very disgusting

business. Yet because it has occasional moments in it when life has a white heat of intensity it represents the culmination of existence to soldier spirits.

It may be proved to be economically disastrous even for the victors, but if it lifts men from the slough of selfishness and meanness, and even for weeks or months makes heroes of them, it is cheap at the price even for the loser.

Further, even on the onlookers the effect of war is in many ways bracing, at least if it be defensive war such as we have been waging. Britain's moral state is plainly higher than it was a year ago. If we are all poorer, we are at least more willing to share. If we are very anxious, we are at least anxious about such things as honour, and the saving of civilization, and not about stocks, and shares, and petty social successes. If we are very sad, we are at least sad with a sorrow that has dignity in it, for the dead we mourn had given themselves for the country, and ere they died had achieved self-forgetfulness. Nor is it the men only who have snatched moral gain from the hour, for women also are truer women than they were. A hundred useful things are being well done by persons who once seemed both stupid and futile. Thousands have ceased to worry about their pleasures or their rights, and have discovered what immense avenues of service open to the key of sympathy. Men everywhere are being humbled by new revelations of the wonder of the mother heart that is in English womanhood.

It is a sadder, poorer, and more confused world on which the sun shines to-day, but it is in many respects a better one. And it would seem that war has made it better.

The second good result of war is one that affects the nation as a whole. It ought to be readily admitted that the German military philosophers are right when they insist that a great and living nation will never be content to mind its own business. It will always want to mind the world's business. We British have persistently done

so, even though we have not reduced our manner of life to a philosophy. A nation of overflowing vitality will never be satisfied simply to carry on an intensive life within its own borders. It will always want to express itself in acts which will affect the whole world. If it believes in its own convictions it will want to spread them. If it values its own civilization it will want to extend its influence. In that sense imperial ambitions are the sign of fullness of mental and spiritual life. Thousands of individuals have only just enough vitality to manage their own lives, and that with difficulty. But the men and women we most value are possessed of a certain overflow of life by reason of which they inevitably come to play a large part in the lives of others, and have energy for influence, sympathy, and love. The same is true of nations, and the nation that is great by reason of possessing this overflow of life will always desire the world for the stage of its actions.

Now war may not be the right method for a nation to employ in furthering its national ambitions, but it is at least one method, and it has the effect of knitting a whole nation in fresh bonds of fellowship and common purpose. That has been very noticeably the case with all the nations involved in this war. Each of them is doing one thing, and doing it with a unanimity and a concentration of purpose which has greatly heightened the national self-consciousness. Each has reached a plane of life above that on which it seems decent to obtrude little differences and party disagreements. Their peoples have been welded into corporate existence, and have tasted the ennobling joy that comes with the possession of a common aim.

Peace has often meant slow disintegration. When no great national business was on foot men have often forgotten the nation to which they belonged, and patriotism has sunk to the level of a mere sentiment. But war at once raises it to the level of a constraining motive for action, and so welds the citizens of the state once more into a real corporate entity.

All this side of truth has to be recognized and appre-

ciated before we can even begin to do any useful thinking about the ways of peace. If we are not to have war, then as Professor James once said in a famous address, we must have 'the moral equivalent of war'.

And yet surely we MUST say that we are not to have war. However true all that has been said may be, it is not the whole truth, and in view of the whole truth war must be pronounced the supreme human folly if not the supreme human crime. To be willing to surrender life is an ennobling attitude, but to be willing to take life can never be so. Indeed to take the lives of those whom we acknowledge to be the sons of God must always involve an element of sacrilege. Here at home we have been seeing the best side of warfare, for military training is nearly all good in its effects. But actual warfare does not only appeal to the greater passions of man, it lets loose also his basest passions, and probably no troops have ever come unscathed through the ordeal of victory in an enemy's country.

Further, war is now used as a method of settling great international questions, but its decisions have no necessary relation to justice. It may work for the deliverance of oppressed peoples, but it has also worked in the past to put weak nations under the heel of brutal oppressors. It is an instrument so crude and primitive that there is a certain humiliation attached to the use of it. It is beneath our self-respect to be using this method for deciding great world-wide issues.

Still further, war is cruel beyond all telling. It is nothing short of a mercy that no human heart can possibly contain a realization of all that this war has meant in suffering for the innocent. It has robbed women in hundreds of that which is dearer than life, and from thousands has taken away the chance of wifehood and motherhood. It has made uncounted children fatherless. It has already slain so many of our best that a certain temporary degeneration of the race is inevitable. It has put the heaviest burden of suffering not on those who have offered themselves for suffering, but on women,

children, and the aged; and these in thousands it has made homeless. It has scattered the constructive labours of generations, and has created in our midst so much chaos and confusion as half a century will scarce suffice to undo.

Above and beyond all it has made hate common. And hate either in individual lives or in nations is always a corroding and destructive force. It is the essentially anti-social venom. It distorts the soul over which it reigns, and makes both men and women ugly and dangerous. At its touch the acquired instincts of decency and honour, which many years of moral training may have built up, often crumble away, and the savage appears again. Even white-haired and gentle ladies have sometimes become extraordinarily bloodthirsty of late. And when hate and fear make an unholy alliance together it would seem that there is hardly any power in the world which can resist their united attack. They dethrone reason, paralyse the heart, and lead to unspeakable things. They deal with civilization as angry torrents do with flower gardens.

In view of these facts there really is no case for war. Unless it can be superseded and relegated to the past of the race, we shall be for ever ashamed, and for ever shut out from the realization of our own highest ambitions. The system of thought which would retain it as a permanent element in the life of mankind is essentially the system of Antichrist.

And yet if the alternative be 'mere' peace we nearly all hesitate. For a world filled with mild and blameless youths incapable of violence we have no taste. For a church that would wish to people the world with that type of humanity we have no patience. The big, virile, and reckless men, of whom God has made a great many, are quite clear about it. Unless they can live dangerously they have no special wish to live at all. Unless great affairs keep them on the stretch they find life unendurable for dullness.

The fact is that peace is by itself a colourless word. It may cover a life noble and true, but it may also cover

a life mean and narrow. Merely to desire peace does not help at all. Noble peace is a result of right ways of thinking and living. It is as it were a by-product of social health. We make no progress simply by longing for peace in the sense of the negation of war. What we have to discover is a way of life which shall seem to all healthy and wholesome souls more desirable than war. Mankind's true calling cannot involve war. But some great positive and strenuous enterprise it must involve. Both men and nations are too great in spirit to be satisfied with less. What, then, is the calling which will eliminate war and yet call into full activity all our powers ?

It is questions such as these which constrain us to ask with new meaning, ' Is Christ the Saviour of the world ? ' If He is, He must have for us the answer we are seeking. He must offer us just that conception of our race's calling which will meet the needs we have seen to be inherent in our humanity.

Now here it is probable that some Christian artists and Christian hymn-writers have done us a great disservice. Many pictures of Christ suggest an effeminate nature, and hymns about the gentle Jesus ' meek and mild ' confirm the same illusion about Him. For that reason many of the virile sons of men have never supposed for a moment that He could offer them the leadership they desire. But the more the real facts are examined the more clearly will it appear that it is Christ and no other who can offer us all that we rightly demand of life. It conveys very little of the truth to call Him the Prince of Peace. He was and is the way to peace, but only because He is first of all the way to a new greatness of life, of which peace will merely be one feature.

He did not come primarily to offer men a way to safety either in this world or the next. It was not to men's timidity that He made His appeal. It was greatness of life that He offered, and it was a greatness that involved a hundred risks. He was indeed meek Himself, but with that invincible meekness before which mere force is

powerless. He was perfectly selfless, but He had a passionate power over against evil, which must have been terrible to behold.

We have sometimes fixed our attention almost exclusively on His power to rescue men from sin. But He did not rescue men from sin that they might live less, but that they might live more.

And the central and essential thing in Christ's word to mankind was His summons to men to unite in establishing the Kingdom of God. The constant purpose of His teaching was to make men understand the nature of that Kingdom, and to kindle in them a flame of desire to see it made actual. It was therefore followers with the soldier spirit in them that He sought. It was men with enough greatness of spirit in them to make them able to sympathize with His world-wide purposes whom He needed. And the more His thought of the Kingdom is examined the more clearly will it be seen to be the one object the pursuit of which can unite mankind, and which can secure for our life all that is ennobling in war, as well as all that is holy in peace.

Christ did not challenge a mere Germany, He challenged the whole world, and He needs followers who will dare to stand to that challenge with Him. What He designed was that the current ways of the world should be overthrown, and that in their place the principles of the Kingdom should be established. He took up the gauntlet of every evil in the world, however firmly entrenched by custom or by greed. He proposed to men the ways of brotherhood instead of the ways of strife, and in so doing He brought Himself into conflict with the elements in human life which had seemed most permanent and impregnable. It was a quite correct instinct that once made some Jews say of His followers that they were men who would turn the world upside down. It was His faith that God made the world to be the stage of a life dominated and made beautiful by the principle of brotherhood, and in the name of God He asked for followers who would live and, if need be, die in the effort to overthrow whatever denies our brotherhood.

He had the whole massive might of money against Him, and from the first singled it out as the arch-enemy of the Kingdom.

He had militarism against Him. For to militarism then, as now, nothing is sacred. He could only reign by overcoming all who delight in war.

He had all the cunning and all the timidity of ecclesiastical organizations against Him, for with their characteristic fear of what is new they dreaded the changes for which He called.

He had the serried ranks of the sensual against Him, and dared to call for a degree and quality of purity which men of the world have always declared to be impossible.

He had all the corruptions of government against Him, and all the prejudices of class and caste. He had whatever is mean and whatever is small in our humanity against Him, and before the end He had the clamour of the populace against Him. And the same foes still oppose all who would have any real part in His campaign. Still they must learn to possess their souls in quietness, though men shout against them. Still they must daily stand before the menace of the world's most deadly powers.

To follow Him, then, may mean peace, but it certainly does not mean mere peace. As a matter of fact His discipleship is so much more like war, that the New Testament is full of military metaphors. It is peace in the sense that it involves no military activity, but it has in it all the thrills that come with essentially great business, and all the fullness of life that comes with danger.

We have seen that one of the great things war does for men is to compel them to rise above their own personal interests, and forget themselves in a great cause. But the service of the Kingdom does this in an even greater measure. Christ's terms are that a man shall lay down his life, and in this service there is no age for retirement. He paraded the fact that suffering, hardship, torture, and even death might be the portion of His followers, and yet still He called on men to enlist. Houses, lands, comforts, relations, worldly prospects, health, and even

life itself were to be put in a second place. Never did any leader dare to ask so much. But the Kingdom cannot be built by any men less desperately in earnest. It requires all that is most virile and most daring in humanity for its realization. Here indeed is scope for the man who wants to live with his life in his hands, and who rejoices when the risks come thick.

As a matter of fact, the men who in the early days of Christianity responded to its demands rose into a fullness of manhood, and a greatness of spirit which no military warfare has ever bestowed upon its servants. In them self-obliteration reached almost to the point of perfection. They were the great personalities of their time.

No doubt it will seem to some strange and even possibly fantastic that such claims should be made for the Christian life. Do we not know it, they will say, and is it not a very safe, tame, and prosaic affair as nowadays exhibited? But that is only because most of those who now profess to walk in that way have proclaimed a truce with their enemies and are total strangers to the real rigours of their calling. When we again begin to take Christ seriously, and have the courage to burst through the trammels of conventional Christianity and rediscover the real Christian life, we shall find that it still involves a willingness to submit to discipline, and calls for all the alertness of being and all the control over selfish impulse, which now we admire so much in our soldiers. There is probably no man in any country under heaven who is not confronted both in his own nature and in the society around him with so many of the enemies of the Kingdom that if he would honestly accept their challenge he would find himself involved in the kind of warfare that lifts personality to its highest levels.

It may indeed be admitted that there is a certain kind of excitement which nothing but actual fighting can produce. To be trying to kill a man who is at the same time trying to kill you is an experience quite unique, and no doubt produces crowded hours of very intense life. Probably there are deep-seated animal

instincts in us all which cannot find complete satisfaction in anything else. But is not that just the part of warfare which we can without any loss afford to dispense with? Is not man's craving for that kind of excitement just one of those cravings which must be exorcized in the interests of civilization? The passion to kill is just one of the passions for which there can be no place in man's true life. And for the rest there is no great result of war on character which cannot be otherwise attained. It does not need military fighting to expose men to ennobling risks and to educe a fine hardihood of spirit. It does not need battle to develop the 'sporting' side of man's nature. In man's perpetual war with nature all the possibilities that we need in this direction are offered us. The qualities we are now thinking of are developed in the men of a score of necessary callings. The men before the mast and the men on the bridge, the men who fish in deep seas, the men who master the air, and the men who drive our trains—all these have their beings knit and their spirits disciplined in just the way which our military enthusiasts desire.

And when we really believe in brotherhood we shall insist that these labours be made in a new way common to man. The discipline they involve may not be needed for all men, but there are probably few professional or commercial men who would not be better men if at one time they had had to go through a curriculum of the sort of hardship these occupations involve. When we become serious about developing hardihood in all our citizens we shall probably insist upon something of the nature of a conscription for labour. We shall see to it that our youths all get the chance to have their manhood toughened by exposure to danger, and by having to acquire physical fitness and resource. We shall hold no man really fitted for citizenship who remains soft either physically or morally, and shall organize our life in view of that conviction.

We shall do this, moreover, not because having reluctantly given up war we shall want to keep something

rather like it, but because when we give our whole minds to the great Christian adventure we shall discover that it demands the sort of men who have been trained in that school of hardihood. We shall realize that men and women who have not had their laziness and their inconstancy of purpose and their self-will cleansed out of them are of no account for Christ's great enterprise. We shall rediscover that following Christ always means carrying a cross, and that the timid and the undisciplined people of the world cannot carry it. When we face seriously the tasks with which our present social condition confronts us we shall realize that they are not to be grappled with effectively except by bodies of men and women who shall be willing to submit to a discipline as real as that of the army. Our present bands of voluntary workers, who hold themselves free to work or not to work according to passing inclination, have been beaten so far by the enemy, and bands of that nature always will be beaten. If we are ever to achieve victory in the battles of social progress, it will need all the concentration of the national will and all the unanimity of purpose which have been produced in us by the challenge of Germany.

For Christ's sake we shall have to accept bonds. To get His business done we shall have to be willing to come under orders. He calls for a disciplined and an ordered host. And when we have found our places in such a host and begun to face the real rigours of His discipleship we shall find out with joy and probably with amazement how great and sweet life is when it has been laid down.

Finally, it has to be realized that Christianity suggests to men the only true imperialism. Christ offers to nations also all that they may rightly desire in the way of an outlet for their energies. He does definitely claim world-dominion, and He does propose to the nations that acknowledge Him tasks of world-wide significance. Only He is different from all other imperial leaders in that He imposes nothing. He cares for no allegiance that is not freely offered. He would be Lord

everywhere, but only by the choice of free men. None of His benefits can be forced on unwilling recipients. And yet He does need the service of nations for the fulfilling of His will. He would indeed say to nations just what He says to individuals, that they must not regard themselves as the end of their living, but must make themselves the servants of mankind. Whenever any nation, by the exercise of its peculiar genius, has attained to some measure of success in the art of enriching or ennobling our civilization, then immediately it becomes possessed of something which it must hold in trust for the world. For the ultimate glory of His Kingdom Christ needs all the glories and honours which all the nations can bring into it, and when it is built each nation will then have its life enriched by contributions from all the other nations.

When nations come to understand the great Christian adventure, and learn that in pursuing it they will find their own highest life, then war will drop out of the world's life just as swords are dropped by men who want to paint, or make music, or tend gardens, or write poetry. It will seem so mean an interruption to life's real business that men will refuse to debase themselves with it. Then, indeed, there will be peace in the smaller sense, but only because the world will be full of the noise and the joy of the warfare of God. It is Christ and Christ alone who can offer to men something so great that for the sake of it they will forgo the joy of battle.

Some who have read these pages and realized the claim here made for the Christian religion, will probably want to say, 'These things may possibly be true of the religion of Jesus, but they are not true of the religion of the ordinary Church member as we know him or her.' Possibly some will want to declare with some heat that they see no resemblance between the easy-going, languid thing that now passes for Christianity and the strenuous life of warfare pictured in this pamphlet. They may even add that the nominal Christians whom they know are so far

from being willing to pick up the gauntlet of the world that they are past masters at the art of compromising between Christian principles and those of ordinary society.

No one can possibly have a more oppressive sense of the truth of such contentions than the writer of these pages. If we Christians are to be honest we must admit that we have not been as those who are called to a great campaign. We are being put to shame every day just now by the thoroughness with which men go about their business, who never pretended to any interest in Christ. Tested by their intensity of purpose, we stand convicted of having done little more than play with our business. So far from composing disciplined and well-ordered bodies of servants we have as individuals been often so touchy, so petty, and so unmanageable, that our Churches have been devoid of power. We have claimed that the spirit of the Lord is a great spirit, and that it is given freely to all who ask for it, but for ourselves we have remained year after year timid, small in purpose, and without any note of authority in our witness.

The life we have thus showed to the world is NOT a desirable alternative to war. It is not conceivable that for the sake of anything so anaemic men will lay down their swords.

This war is saying a hundred impressive things in its own tragic way. But among them all surely this is for Christ's followers the most solemn—that if we are to help the world to see that in the following of Christ and not in strife lies its health, its joy, and its fullness of life, then indeed we shall have to rise to a new type of discipleship. We shall have to embark ourselves on the great adventure from which we have hitherto so largely shrunk. We shall have to enlist with a soldier's thoroughness under Him who still says to all would-be recruits, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'

Without that cross Christianity is *not* the great adventure. With that cross it makes war seem a mean and petty business.

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